

Regional and State Views of Estuarine Condition in Northeast U.S. Based on 2000 and 2001 National Coastal Assessment Data

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The National Coastal Assessment (NCA) is a probability-based survey that permits assessment of estuarine conditions at national, regional, or large-system scales. Additionally, states may use these data to comply with requirements of the Clean Water Act (CWA), which mandates reporting quantitative estimates of the condition of state waters [section 305(b) of CWA]. A National Coastal Condition Report, based on year 2000 NCA data, will be released in 2004. Here, we highlight methods by which state and regional policy makers can visualize and query the information to address local concerns. We summarize NCA data collected in 2000 and 2001 to show regional condition of estuarine water, sediment, and benthic communities in the northeastern U.S. (Maine through Delaware) and major estuarine systems therein. This regional summary highlights gradients in many of the measured indicators and provides context for state assessments. We also use simple Excel and Arc Explorer tools to display and summarize data grouped by state. These tools provide a convenient method for calculating estimates of the percent area of state estuarine waters failing specified criteria and the variance of those estimates. All 2000 and 2001 NCA estuarine data for the northeastern states and the exploratory tools are available on the web at: <http://www.epa.gov/emap/nca/html/regions/index.html>.